

HISTORY OF WASATCH COUNTY

In the same year that the 13 colonies revolted against English rule and signed the Declaration of Independence, the first white men traveled through Wasatch valley. At least this is the earliest recorded date of any visit by white men through this region.

Two Franciscan friars, Francisco Aransazo Dominguez and Silvestre Velez de Escalante, the famed Father Escalante who explored Utah, started from Santa Fe for the purpose of discovering a direct route to Monterey, California, site of one of their largest missions. They began their journey in July, 1776.

According to descriptions of their journal, they passed through what is now Colorado. They crossed into what is now Utah near White river. The best interpretation of their journal claims they followed Green river for some distance, crossed over to the Duchesne river and followed probably what was the west fork, crossing the mountain at the head of Lake canyon and coming down through Wasatch valley and Provo river to Utah lake.

White trappers undoubtedly traversed the valley in later years, but it was not until 1858, less than a dozen years after the first Mormons came west, that permanent homes and settlers came to Wasatch valley.

This first settlement in 1858 was sparse, limited to less than half a dozen homes in the lower end of the valley. From the journal of John Crook, self-appointed historian and one of the first men ever to settle here, we learn that William M. Wall, George W. Bean, William Meeks, Aaron Daniels and others brought stock and grazed it in the summer of 1858, and also started the construction of ranch homes. Mr. Crook's journal says: "William M. Wall built a ranch at the south end of the valley, Father Docket bought the valley, later known as John Brown's home, Aaron Daniels built a ranch house about two miles north of Daniels, on what later became known as Meeks Bottoms. All of the above parties I think kept some stock through the winter in the valley."

The journal says Father Docket "bought" a place, which would lead one to believe he did not settle that first year of 1858 because there would have been no places to buy from anyone. Several old settlers agree that Wall, Meeks and Daniels were the first men to build homes here. Mr.

Crook's journal does not make this point entirely clear, and there is little else written on the subject that could be considered authoritative.

While these ranchers were building homes in the summer and fall of 1858, two survey parties of Provo men, headed by J. C. Snow, visited the valley twice, one in July and once in October, and surveyed two tracts in the north and central portions of the valley, dividing them into 20-acre tracts and claiming all the surveyed plots. They did not settle, however, returning to Utah valley that fall. It is recorded that ice froze half an inch thick in the water cups of the July surveying party one night. The party claimed over 100 tracts before summer's end.

Next year, in the spring of 1859, a group of Provo men, one of whom was Mr. Crook, started for Wasatch valley, to settle there. The party included, besides Mr. Crook, Charles N. Carroll, John Carline, John Jordan, John Carline, Sr., James Carline, Mr. Carpenter, whose first name was not designated, Jesse Bond, Henry Chavon and William Giles. On the last day of April they started for the valley, taking their wagons apart and carrying them piece by piece over a huge snowslide in Provo canyon. The next day they traveled to William Wall's ranch and reached it the first day of May, 1859.

Mr. Crook's journal of the trip continues: "Early the next morning we crossed the river and after traveling for about two miles we arrived at Daniels' ranch, where we crossed the creek on ice. We journeyed on about a mile further to Meeks' ranch, turned our teams out to feed and concluded to have breakfast. After breakfast was over, we started out on foot in a northerly direction to look out a suitable place for the location of our camp. We found it very difficult to cross Center Creek and Lake Creek because of the drifts of snow which lay in the willows along the banks. In a few hours we arrived at the plat of ground designated for a city; off the ground, and concluded to commence plowing immediately.

In looking place, we concluded to camp in place, we concluded to move our wagons next day to the present place, where we are now known as the Lone-Lone branch, or John Mc-

Donald's spring. After moving we built a large wickup of poles, covering it with willows, long wheat grass and drift. I have known as many as 30 persons crowded in there of a night. Being a mammoth affair, it was considered the London wickup, hence the name London Spring. The moving and building occupied about two days, and I think on the fifth of May, Thomas Rasmussen and myself, having only one yoke of cattle each, joined our teams and commenced plowing."

The party of 10 was predominantly English, hence the name London creek and London spring. It runs today about two miles north of town. The area was also known as New London by many settlers.

Daughter Nannet Timpanogos. The family of William Davidson was believed to be the first family to settle in the valley. His daughter, which he named Timpanogos after the mountain, was the first white child born in the valley.

About May 20 of the same summer the settlers arrived, 1859, some of the 10 men returned to Provo for grain and supplies, and were accompanied on their return by quite a number of new settlers, among them, Thomas H. Giles, Hyrum Oaks, Martin Oaks, Sydney Expendon and others.

About the last of May another party arrived. More land was surveyed, and parties came and went all summer long acquiring ground. In some stayed to settle, and the growth and development of Wasatch valley had begun. The homestead of Heber was surveyed this same summer.

An account is contained in Mr. Crook's journal. "Sometime about the middle of June Leuprey Surveyor, Jesse Pauler commenced to survey the plat of land that had been left for a town site, the starting point being George W. Clydes corner. Charles N. Carroll and John and John Crook were chain bearers. The survey was run on the west line of Main street for eight blocks; thence west five and a half blocks; thence north eight blocks north to the north field line of survey.

"This section of land was staked off in blocks and lots at this time, the east part of the city, some two months later. A forty lot off this time. Some parties moved down on the fort line immediately and commenced to build. John W. Witt, I think, put up the first house. Bliss Cox and John Hamilton were not far behind with his house. Others followed suit right along."

The fort was forty rods square, four rods being allowed for each family. William Davidson, one of the first three settlers, built his city lot on the block now occupied by the old tinning office. Good crops of grain were raised that first summer in 1859, although some was lost in a September storm. Most of it was harvested, however, Jesse McCarroll and company brought the first threshing machine from Provo that fall. Settlement spread to the west side of the valley that summer also and farms were established near the mouth of Snake Creek. Peter Shirts began construction of a saw mill at the mouth of Snake Creek.

"There were," Mr. Crook wrote, "17 families in Heber the winter of 1859-60. There were also some families at Midway."

First Winter Uneventful. The settlers' first winter was uneventful, as far as major happenings were concerned. December was clear and cold, and everywhere they hauled their wood from the canyons.

"Some boys and girls came up from Provo Christmas week on a visit and had a good time," Mr. Crook wrote. "When they returned we felt lonesome."

About 18 inches of snow lay on the ground that winter. During the winter months William Meeks and other men went up Center Creek canyon and brought out lumber for sawmill. They began sawing in the fall of 1860, and Mr. Crook claims this was the first sawmill in the valley. Mr. Shirts later completed his mill at Snake Creek and was the second mill in operation.

"About the middle of March, 1860, a number of families arrived from Provo, among whom were Zerita Pathner, T. G. Giles, George Giles, Frederick Giles, Jonathan Clegg and others whom I do not remember. Parties kept arriving all the month from Utah county, and by the first of April there were about 40 teams plowing in the north field and Center Creek."

The second summer of Wasatch valley, 1860, saw good fortune to men with them. Crops were good, more than doubling the previous

year, and ripened earlier in the season. The settlers built a double log house, 20 by 40 feet, with a dirt roof, which they used for a meeting house and school. It was completed enough to hold their Pioneer Day celebration. In it on July 24.

William Meeks, who has served as presiding elder until now, resided in the fall of 1860 and was chosen to re-place him. He was herding cattle in Round valley, later known as Wallburg, and came to Heber to accept the position. He chose James Laird and John M. Mur-

dock as his counselors. "The north and west ends were now closed in nearly to the river by a five-foot worm fence, the south line being about 80 rods south of the present county road to Midway. There were about 4,000 acres in the fields," Mr. Crook wrote.

The fort lines were all filled up by the fall of 1860, with two families to the four rods formerly allotted one, in many instances. There were over 40 families in

(Continued on another page)

Best Wishes
For A Joyous Season



Again we extend the
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Clarence Olson

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While those ranchers were
building homes in the summer
of 1858, two survey parties,
headed by J. C. Snow, visited the valley twice.
The first party explored the
valley from Santa Fe for
the purpose of discovering a di-
rect route to Monterey, California,
one of their largest mis-
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in July, 1876.

According to descriptions of
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William Meeka, who has served as presiding elder until now, resigned in the fall of 1880 and William Wall was chosen to replace him. He was herding cattle in Round valley, later known as Walaburg, and came to Heber to accept the position. He chose James Leht and John M. Mur- (Continued on another page)

owned by John Turner in the north field. The other team of yoke of cattle belonged to Robert Broadhead and James Davidson. They were plowing on a piece of ground due east of William Davidson. On inquiry they told family to settle in the river. son was believed to be the first family to settle in the river. The family of William Davidson, daughter named Thompson, was plowing after the mountain, the first white child born in the valley. There were 17 families in Heber the winter of 1859-60. There were also some families at Midway.

of the valley. I think this was the first day we arrived home when the day after tomorrow we will have the first snow over with a blizzard. These parties had come from Salt Creek or Norfolk county."

"From Mr. Crook's journal it appears evident that William Wall, Daniel and William Meeks will the first ranch homes in Robertson and James Davidson, and the first farmers in the valley of April and turning over the land although Mr. Crook estimates at 10 followed them by only a few more."

[illegible]

When Mr. Crook makes reference to the present time, it should be remembered that the first time he built his ranch was in 1858. He and Daniel were the first to build a ranch in the valley. When Mr. Crook makes reference to the present time, it should be remembered that the first time he built his ranch was in 1858. He and Daniel were the first to build a ranch in the valley.

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Mr. Crook's journal continues:
"They were plowing inside of
one and one-half mile square of
land and surveyed the pre-
ceding July. This plat of land be-
ing already claimed, and our per-
sonal feeling desirous of jump-
ing any one's claim, concluded to
examine further on up the
Creek. We traveled on about half
a mile and found the north line
of stakes of said plat and found
the ground good and laid out
to go back to work and staked
off twenty acres each as near as
could be ascertained by stepping
along the ground, and concluded to
commence plowing immediately,
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Mr. Crook's journal continues:
"About the middle of March,
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from Provo, among whom were
Zettra Palmer, T. G. Gilles, George
Geller, Frederick Gilles, Jonathan
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Clagg and others whom I do not
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The journal says Father Decker "bought" a place, which would lead one to believe he did not settle that first year of 1858 because there would have been no places to buy from anyone. Several old settlers agree that Wall, Meeks and Daniels were the first men to build homes here. Mr. Crook's journal does not make this point entirely clear, and there is little else written on the subject that could be considered authoritative.

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Next year, in the spring of 1859 a group of Provo men, one of whom was Mr. Crook, started for Wasatch valley, to settle there. The party included, besides Mr. Crook, Charles N. Carroll, Thomas Russell, John Jordan, Thomas Russell, James Carille, Mr. Carpenter, whose first name was not the designated, Jesse Bond, Henry Chawin and William Giles. On the last day of April they started for it. . . .

From Mr. Crook's journal, it seems evident that William Wall, Aaron Daniels and William Meeks built the first ranch homes in Provo canyon. The next day they traveled to William Wall's ranch and reached it the first day of May, 1859.

Mr. Crook's journal of the trip continues: "Early the next morning we crossed the river and after traveling for about two miles we arrived at Daniels' ranch where we crossed the creek on ice. We journeyed on about a mile further to Meek's ranch, turned our teams out to feed and concluded to have breakfast. After breakfast was over, we started out on foot in a northerly direction for the location of our camp. We found it very difficult to cross Center Creek and Lake Creek because of the drifts of snow which lay in the hollows along the banks. In a few hours we arrived at the plat of ground designated for a currier's dwelling house now owned by John M. Murphy. When Mr. Crook makes reference to the present house, it should be remembered his account was compiled and written from his journal for the first issues of the Wasatch Wave in 1889 and it is from there this is taken.

First Soil Turned In Looking north we saw two dark objects moving along and after gazing intently for some time we saw that they were moving backwards and forwards. The idea struck us that it was some parties plowing; so off we started to fathom the problem; in the north and central portions of the valley, dividing them into 20-acre tracts and claiming all the surveyed plots. They did not serve, however, returning to Utah valley that fall. It is recorded that ice froze half an inch thick in the water cups of the July surveying party one night. The party claimed over 100 tracts before summer's end.

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